GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4323
ANSWERED ON:21.08.2001
HOLDING UP OF MILITANTS IN A MOSQUE IN J & K
NARESH KUMAR PUGLIA

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was a fierce exchange of fire to flush out militants holded up in a mosque at Shopian in South Kashmir in the last week of May, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of security personnel and the number of militants killed/injured in the said exchange of fire;

(d) whether it is a fact that the militants holded up in the mosque were later on given a safe passage;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the reasons for which the militants were given safe passage ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO)

(a) to (c): As reported by State Government on 30.5.2001 militants occupied a Mosque at Kharwara Shopian District Pulwama in South Kashmir. The area was cordoned by security forces and militants were asked to surrender, but they refused to surrender and opened fire on security forces.

One SF Jawan and one SPO were killed in the exchange of fire. No loss of life on the part of militants was reported.

(d) to (f): A strategy is apparently being pursued by terrorists for taking shelter in religious places with the primary objective of inviting retaliatory action from security forces, thereby arousing religious sentiments of common people in favour of so-called `Jehad`, and at the same time breed hatred against security forces. In all such operations security forces have observed restraint to maintain sanctity of religious places.

Security forces have the latitude to deal with such emerging situations based on the ground level exigencies of each particular case and to plan their operations in such a way that minimum possible damage to religious structures takes place without compromising the objective of the operation.